

Church officials, and some of the best known men in science, education, business, and professional life in America.

No wonder, therefore, that a Boston Committee thus established has not fulfilled its mission. It is really a local committee itself, and has added an eighth member also interested in the museum at Boston.

An "American Egyptological Society" seems to be the just, wise, logical outcome of what the London Committee foolishly attempted, the Boston Committee has signally failed to carry out, and of what we ought to have among our learned bodies as well as England, Germany, and France. Of great interest would be its annual meeting for reading of papers. It could raise much larger sums and from more subscribers than could a society directed by any foreign committee. The brilliant discoveries in Egypt by Americans well prophesy how richly rewarded an American Society would be in its explorations there.

NILUS.

April, 1905.

NEW FORMS OF MUSIC.

To the Editor of The Open Court:

Your "Musical Caprice" in the June number of *The Open Court* is most instructive, possesses also stimulating qualities which prompt me to offer the following comments:

You say in one part: "If mankind must needs have something new, why has there not yet appeared a composer whose endeavor would be to construct music based on absolutely correct mathematical relations?" This struck me as harboring possibilities fraught with much danger to the peace of mind of all music-loving people the world over. Let me attempt to prove the reasonable basis for my fears. Helmholtz, in his great scientific work on tone-sensation, tells of his practical experiments in the use of the just-tempered scales, by using a harmonium tuned scientifically exact through a limited number of keys. This instrument failed to serve his purpose satisfactorily, when modulations to near-by related keys were required. Helmholtz's translator and disciple, Mr. Alexander J. Ellis, went much further in elaborating a scientific formula, completing theoretically, the exact pitch for all the keys and modulations. His table of modulation divides the octave into 117 tones, whereas we use in our even-tempered scale only 12 semi-tones to the octave.

Mr. Ellis says regarding the practical value of this scientific performance: "Of course it is quite out of the question that any attempt should be made to deal with such numbers of tones, differing often by only two cents from each other. (Cent equals $\frac{1}{100}$ of an equal semitone.)"

"No ear could appreciate the multitude of distinctions. No instrument, even if once correctly tuned, would keep its intonation sufficiently well to preserve such niceties. No keyboard could be invented for playing the notes, even if it could be tuned, although it is very easy to mark a piece of ordinary music so as to indicate the precise notes to be struck; hence some compromise is needed." (Helmholtz, English translation, p. 464.)

On the other hand, when dealing with our poverty-stricken system, containing only 12 equal semitones to the octave, Helmholtz finds certain disadvantages. His words may be considered as a scientific prophecy when we

contemplate the tendencies of our ultra-modern composers. Perhaps he foresaw the coming of such a writer as Max Reger of Munich, when he wrote the following lines:

"Continual bold modulational leaps reckon entirely to destroy the feeling for tonality. These are unpleasant symptoms for the further development of art." Bearing on this point, it may be interesting to insert at this place a few stray individual opinions concerning Reger's works. Both the following extracts are from the *New York Musical Courier* of November 9, 1904, and April, 1905:

"The Munich composer, (in his C-major sonata for violin and piano) has cut adrift from practically every tradition, *defying even tonality*. It is difficult to follow his bold flights of imagination and still bolder progression, much less to understand them. *Either this work is a revolutionary movement of great pith and moment, beyond the horizon of common mortals, or it is the work of a genius who will soon be a candidate for the insane asylum.* One thing is sure, *a strong personality and great musical knowledge* are revealed here."

"Max Reger is creating a stirr here (Dresden). Roth in his Music Salon gave him a hearing. Reger's artistic instincts are deeply seated and he is much of an enthusiast. With Mahler, Bruckner, and Nicodé he has "lengths" in common. Parts of his chamber music seem endless. On the occasion we heard songs given by Sanna Von Rbyn and chamber music, all heavy musical fare; a series of contradictory terms, deep thoughts and good and bad jokes. His style is quaint, even stilty at times, but on the whole full of idealism. Reger seems a combative mind, ready to fight. *Many people (even musicians) left the hall in full despair over his so-called disharmonies.*"

In view of the facts presented above, permit me to ask you how a new departure, such as was recommended by you, to be taken in the direction of an accurate mathematical musical system, can be considered otherwise than with terror? If, as it appears, the character of our most modern compositions is already suffering from too great an inclination toward promiscuous modulation and threatens total loss of the sense of tonality, what dire results must we not expect to bear with if the just system with 117 tones instead of only 12 to the octave once becomes fashionable?

ST. LOUIS, MO.

I. L. SCHOEN.

[In the article referred to by Mr. I. L. Shoen, I did not recommend but only suggested the possibility of other musical systems; but I would say that the failure of one attempt would not disprove the feasibility of the general scheme in one way or another.—ED.]

ἦΘΟΣ ἈΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΟΥ ΔΑΙΜΩΝ.

We have frequently made use of the Greek aphorism, *ethos anthropoi daimon*, as a motto. It is a well known and often quoted saying, but we have been unable to trace it to its source. We have repeatedly inquired of Greek scholars but so far without avail. Accordingly we now make public request for any information that a Greek scholar may be able to give us on the subject. For those who are not familiar with Greek, we might repeat what we said in *The Open Court*, Vol. I, p. 695, that the words are almost untrans-